Electrification of villages of Begusarai District in Bihar

*133. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether all the villages in Begusarai district of Bihar have been electrified;

(b) if not, how many villages are yet to be electrified in the district; and

(c) by when such villages are likely to be electrified?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K ALAGH): (a) Out of 1190 villages in Begusarai District, 835 villages are reported to be electrified.

(b) 355 villages are yet to be electrified in the District.

(c) The financial and physical target of rural electrification in the States are fixed by Planning Commission on annual basis, subject to availability of financial resources, infrastructural facilities and past performance of the Board. The District wise priority are fixed by the State Government. The electrification of remaining villages in Begusarai District would, therefore, depend upon the availablity of financial resources, power supply position in the State, other inputs and priority accorded by the State Government.

Outcome of G-15 Summit held at Kuala Lumpur

*134. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether India actively participated at the seventh G-15 Summit held at Kuala Lumpur recently, if so, who led the Indian delegation;

(b) what were the details of discussions held there and whether any consensus was reached on issues faced by member countries relating to currently volatility, market access, instruments like anti-dumping and access to high technology etc.; and

(c) whether India felt satisfied with the outcome of Summit on furthering Souih-South Cooperation and the 56 billion dollar intra-regional trade?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA): Yes Sir, the Indian delegation was led by the Hon'ble Vice-President of India.

(b) and (c) The Seventh G-15 Summit at Kuala Lumpur from November 3-6, 1997 examined the impact of globalisation on the future direction of the world economy and recognised that the growth prospects of all countries, particularly developing countries, will depend largely on their ability to participate positively in this emerging global economic system. It emphasised that spurring economic growth in developing countries was, therefore, in the interest of the global economy as a whole. The Summit renewed the commitment to a globalisation process which leads to a more equitable and sustainable pattern of development and rapid economic growth. It urged that the continued positive participation of developing countries, including the least developed, in the global economy be reciprocated by a supportive, fair and non-discriminatory international economic environment.

The Seventh G-15 Summit was for the first time preceded by a meeting of the G-15 Trade and Economic Ministers. Accordingly, the Summit foeussed on a number of WTO-relatcd issues like giving priority to implementation of existing commitments under the Uruguay Round Agreements, seeking better market access for developing countries, ruling out the overloading of the WTO agenda through a new Round of trade negotiations, ensuring that anti-dumping provisions arc not used as an instrument of protection and trade harassment by developed

countries against developing country exports and opposing the inclusion of extraneous issues like the Labour Clause in international trade. The Summit made a strong plea for reinforcing and giving effect to prefcrantial treatment to developing countries in all areas of WTO. The Trade and Economic Ministers of G-15 will meet again in the countext of the next WTO Ministerial Conference in May, 1998.

In the wake of recent developments in the international financial and capital markets, the Summit emphasised the importance of maintaining sound monetary and fiscal policies as well as for strengthening regional and international cooperation in managing crises in the future. Through a separate statement on the subject, the Summit called on the IMF and World Bank to study the recent developments in currency markets "with a view to appropriately regulating them in order to make them more open and transparent." It was decided that G-15 Ministers of Finance, Governors of Central Banks and other appropriate authorities will meet in December, 1997 to consider the matter and make necessaryrecommendations. The outcome revealed G-15's 'quick response capability' in dealing with urgent international economic issues of concern to developing countries.

The Summit called for intensified South-South Cooperation and consultations with the G-15 acting as a catalyst and forum for regular consultations among developing countries. It emphasised political commitment by all through greater involvement in cooperation projects and substantive inter-Summit consultations. It agreed to enhance cooperation in trade and investment facilitation by improving existing mechanisms for information exchange; facilitating business mobility through long-term multiple-entry business visa; alignment of standards and conformance requirements with the first Seminar on Quality and standards being held in India in January, 1998; simplification of customs procedures and practices; and intensification of trade and investment promotion activities. It agreed to take further measures to share skills, expertise and technology. Efforts were outlined for increasing intra-G-15 trade, investment and technology cooperation and for vigorously implementing South-South Cooperation projects. Apart from the G-15 cooperation projects being coordinated by India in the fields of solar energy, gene banks, small scale industries and informatics, India offered to impart training to trainees from G-15 countries in 37 institutions in India as part of the Centres of Educational Excellence project. India participated at the G-15 Business Exhibition and built up a hightech image A 40-member Indian business delegation was able to establish alliances and interact with counterparts from other G-15 countries.

The Summit also called for promoting South-South consultations for pursuing a positive and productive North-South Dialogue, the main elements of which would be balanced benefits to developing countries in terms of trade, investment and financial flows as well as access to high and environmentally sound technologies. The Summit endorsed G-15's role of a pro-North-South trade and investment coalition and opinion builder to prevent North's retreat from multilateralism and development cooperation. The G-15 will aim at forging common positions on international financial and capital markets and on the multilateral trade agenda.

India actively participated and contributed to the successful outcome of the G-15 Summit. India's concerns and suggestions found favour among G-15 countries and are duly reflected in the outcome of the Summit.